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~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~/~~NOFORN~~ 0226 SECTION 1 OF 2
SUBJ: THIS IS I (b)(3):10 USC 424
1. ARGENTINA (AR)
2. (b)(3):10 USC 424
3. (U) POLITICAL - REACTIONS TO REDUCTIONS OF FMS CREDITS WITHIN ARGENTINE ARMY AND NAVY
4. N/A
5. 7703
6. 770324
7. 7703, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
8. (b)(3):10 USC 424
9.
10. (b)(3):10 USC 424
11. NO

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15. NO
16. SUMMARY: (U) THIS REPORT IS A ROUND UP OF REACTIONS TO REDUCTION OF US FMS CREDITS AS EXPRESSED BY A NUMBER OF ARGENTINE ARMY AND NAVY OFFICERS. SEE IR (b)(3):10 USC 424 FOR ARGENTINE AIR FORCE REACTIONS.

(b) (3):10 USC 424

2. DETAILS: 1. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ AT A RECENT CEREMONY, THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARGENTINE ARMY COMMENTED ONLY HALF JOKINGLY, "WITH FRIENDS LIKE THE US, ARGENTINA DOES NOT NEED ENEMIES". HE THEN PROCEEDED TO PRESS FOR A LOGICAL EXPLANATION OF THE US REDUCTION IN FMS CREDITS, MUCH TO THE INTEREST OF A NUMBER OF OTHER ARGENTINE OFFICERS AND LATIN AMERICAN ATTACHES WHO GATHERED AROUND TO HEAR AND PARTICIPATE IN THE EXCHANGE. A STRONG CONSENSUS WAS EVIDENT AMONG THE LATIN AMERICANS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE DOLLAR VALUE OF THE FMS CREDITS WAS NOT PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT, BUT THE "HIGH HANDED AND ARROGANT" WAY OF HANDLING THE PROBLEM AND THE ALLEGED INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS WAS UNACCEPTABLE. THE CONVERSATION ENDED ON A FRIENDLY NOTE WITH ARGENTINE OFFICER ASSURING THEY REGARDED THE PROBLEM TO BE POLITICAL AND THAT THEY DID NOT INTEND TO LET IT AFFECT THE EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ARGENTINE AND US ARMIES. THERE WAS ALSO HOPE EXPRESSED THAT THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION WOULD EVENTUALLY APPRECIATE THAT ARGENTINA WAS ENGAGED IN A REAL WAR AGAINST MARXIST SUBVERSION IN DEFENSE OF TRADITIONAL WESTERN VALUES.

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2. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ ANOTHER SOURCE INDICATED THAT THE CURRENT US POLICY CONNECTING SECURITY ASSISTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS WILL CREATE A VOID. ARGENTINA AND HER NEIGHBORS MUST CONTINUE TO PROCURE MILITARY EQUIPMENT, BUT THE US SEEMS TO BE REMOVING ITSELF AS A SUPPLIER. THEREFORE, WHILE MOST ARGENTINE MILITARY PREFER US ARMAMENT, THE PRESENT POLITICAL CONDITIONS TEND TO SUPPORT THOSE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ARGENTINE MILITARY WHO PREFER TO PURCHASE MATERIAL FROM EUROPE (PRINCIPALLY FRANCE, ENGLAND AND WEST GERMANY), OR MAYBE EVEN FROM COMMUNIST BLOC NATIONS.

(b)(3):10 USC 424;Sec. 3.3(b) (1)

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NEW ARGENTINE ARMY ATTACHE TO MOSCOW, COLONEL MONTES. WHEN SOURCE WAS ASKED WHY ARGENTINE HAD ESTABLISHED AN ARMY ATTACHE OFFICE IN THE SOVIET UNION, HE RESPONDED THAT ONE MUST KNOW HIS ENEMY. SOURCE THEN SHOWED [redacted] A (b)(3):10 USC 424 SECOND LETTI4 S-535 14 MAR 77 RECEIVED FROM THE SOVIET MILITARY ATTACHE STATIONED IN BUENOS AIRES, NAVY CAPTAIN VLADIMIR VASELENKO. IN ESSENCE, THE LETTER STATED THAT THE SOVIET UNION DID NOT SELL ARMS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES, (SIC), BUT WAS PREPARED TO DONATE, AT THE REQUEST OF THE ARGENTINE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, SOME SAMPLES OF THE AK FAMILY OF WEAPONS TO AN ARGENTINE MILITARY MUSEUM. THE PURPOSE OF SUCH A GIFT WAS TO IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ARGENTINE MILITARY AND THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES. SOURCE COMMENTED, "ISN'T IT STRANGE THAT THE USSR SHOULD OFFER THESE FIGTS JUST AT THE MOMENT WHEN THE US REDUCED ITS MILITARY AID TO ARGENTINE?"

4. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ SOURCE (PARA 2&3) STATED THAT RECENT US HUMAN RIGHTS PRONOUNCEMENTS WERE PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNISTS BY PROVIDING THEM OPPORTUNITIES HERETOFORE DENIED. AS AN EXAMPLE HE STATED THAT THE ARGENTINE ARMY WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET AND CUBAN INFLITRATION IN PERU. HE SAID THAT ARGENTINE INTELLIGENCE BELIVES THAT CUBAN ADVISORS ARE LOCATED IN THE INTERIOR OF PERU AND ASKED IF THE US COULD CONFIRM THIS INFORMATION FOR HIM. FURTHER, HE ADVISED THAT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PERUVIAN MILITARY HAD GONE TO THE SOVIET UNION FOR MILITARY TRAINING. ARMY INTELLIGENCE IS CONCERNED THAT THESE INDIVIDUALS WILL RETURN FROM THE USSR, INFILTRATE PERUVIAN MILITARY UNITS, AND SERVE AS INSTRUMENTS OF SOVIET INTELLIGENCE AND INFLUENCE.

5. (C/NOFORN) A NUMBER OF CONTACTS AS THE LTC LEVEL HAVE ALSO DEMONSTRATED THEIR CONCERN REGARDING THE FMS CREDIT SITUATION. MOST OF THESE OFFICERS ARE HURT AND CONFUSED AS TO WHY THE US GOVERNMENT SINGLED OUT ARGENTINA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND THEN FAILED TO CRITICIZE VIOLATIONS IN CUBA, ANGOLA ETC. THE CONTACTS HAVE BEEN VERY CAREFUL TO

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~~C O N F I D E N T I A L/NOFORN~~ Ø226 SECTION 2 OF 2
POINT OUT THAT EVEN THOUGH THE US GOVERNMENT HAS CHOSEN TO CASTIGATE ITS NEIGHBORS AND ALLIES, THESE ACTIONS WOULD HAVE LITTLE IMPACT ON ARMY TO ARMY RELATIONSHIPS. THEY REMPHASIZE THAT THE ISSUE IS STRICTLY POLITICAL AND SHOULD HAVE NO BEARING ON PRFESSIONAL MILITARY MATTERS. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT JUNIOR OFFICERS (LT-MAJ) ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT THE CREDIT REDUCTION. APPARENTLY THEY HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED BY THEIR SENIORS TO AVOID THE SUBJECT.
6. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ ON 17 MAR 77 SEVERAL FOREIGN ATTACHES FROM PARAGUAY, CHILE, URUGUAY, AND BRAZIL CHIDED RO REGARDING THE FMS CREDIT SITUATION, MAKING REFERENCE TO WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS LACK OF DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT. THEY WERE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO REMARKS

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ATTRIBUTED TO MR. TYSON AT GENEVA. CONCURRENTLY, A VERY SENIOR OFFICER ON THE ARGENTINE ARMY GENERAL STAFF ADMITTED [redacted] THAT ARGENTINE ATTACHES ABROAD HAVE BEEN TASKED TO OBTAIN AN ASSESSMENT OF US ATTACHE OPINIONS ON THE FMS CUTS. HE STATED THAT INITIAL REPORTS INDICATED THAT THE US ATTACHES ARE NON-COMMITTAL AND TEND TO EMPHASIZE THE MORALITY OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND ITS FIRM COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS.

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7. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ THERE CONTINUE TO BE INDICATIONS THAT THE INITIAL ARGENTINE REACTION TO REDUCED FMS CREDITS WAS BASED ON ONLY A VAGUE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM. THE G-3 STAFF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR COORDINATING COURSES PROVIDED UNDER GRANT TRAINING (IME-T) WAS CONFUSED INITIALLY AS TO WHETHER THOSE COURSES WOULD STILL BE AVAILABLE. ADDITIONALLY, THE CHIEF OF THE JOINT STAFF REVEALED VERY LITTLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION DURING A MEETING WITH COMUSMILGP, ARGENTINA. ALSO THE SECRETARY OF THE GENERAL COMMAND SCHEDULED A MEETING WITH COMUSMILGP ON 22 MARCH TO REVIEW THE SITUATION BECAUSE HE WAS CONCERNED THAT "PRESIDENT VIDELA HAD RECEIVED INCORRECT INFORMATION FROM HIS STAFF".

8. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ NAVY REACTIONS TO THE RECENT US HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN QUITE SIMILAR TO THE ARMY. FEELINGS HAVE BEEN HURT AND THE OFFICERS ARE FRUSTRATED TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION. MANY SENIOR OFFICERS ARE SHOCKED AND RESENT BEING COMPARED TO ETHIOPIA. NEVERTHELESS, THEY HAVE REITEREATED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS THAT THE US DECISIONS WERE POLITICAL AND WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE FUTURE OF THE US NAVAL MISSION IN ARGENTINA. THEY ARE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT FURTHER CONGRESSIONAL ACTION MAY ELIMINATE THE US MISSION AND HAVE UNDERTAKEN A STUDY TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF SUCH AN EVENTUALITY. FROM A FINANCIAL STANDPOINT, THE NAVY STAFF IS FEARFUL THAT IT WILL BE UNABLE TO SUPPORT THE [redacted] PROJECT BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF FUNDS FOR SPARE PARTS. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THEY ARE CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF RETURNING THE [redacted] INSTALLATION TO THE US GOVERNMENT.

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9. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ AN ARMY COLONEL ASSIGED TO THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY RECENTLY COMMENTED THAT GOA WAS VERY APPRECIATIVE OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE US EMBASSY IN RECENT MONTHS IN KEEPING LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN AND IN EXPLAINING THE SERIOUS CONCERN OF USG OVER ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS

VIOLATIONS. MAINLY AS A RESULT OF THE MANY INITIATIVES OF THE EMBASSY, THE GOA HAD BEEN ABLE TO ANTICIPATE THE CURRENT PROBLEM, BUT EXPECTED THAT INITIATIVE TO COME FROM CONGRESS RATHER THAN THE STATE DEPARTMENT. HE CONTINUED BY SAYING THAT HE WAS GLAD THAT THE US EMBASSY PERCEIVED THE ARGENTINE REACTION TO THE FMS CREDIT PROBLEM AS BEING

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J-5	SAGA	G/C	M/RA	DIA	NIC	TOTAL

(b) (3):10 [redacted]

RESTRAINED SINCE THAT WAS EXACTLY WHAT PRESIDENT VIDELA INTENDED TO CONVEY. THE COLONEL EXPLAINED THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOA HAD NO OTHER CHOICE THAN TO REJECT US INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL ARGENTINE AFFAIRS, THE REDUCTION OF FOREIGN MILITARY SALES CREDITS DOES NOT HAVE GREAT IMPACT SINCE ARGENTINA CAN OBTAIN ARMS FROM OTHERS SOURCES, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST. HE CONCLUDED SAYING THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN GOA AND USG HAD NOT REACHED THE LEVEL OF CONFRONTATION, AT LEAST NOT YET, AND THAT ARGENTINE WOULD PREFER TO AVOID SUCH A CONFRONTATION.

COMMENT: ~~(C)~~ THE MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM THE ARMY AND NAVY ON THE CREDIT REDUCTION IS QUITE CLEAR AND CLOSELY PARALLELS THE ONE RECEIVED FROM THE AIR FORCE. BASICALLY, THE FEELING OF THE ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN HURT AND THEY RESENT US INTERFERENCE IN THEIR PRIVATE AFFAIRS. NEVERTHELESS, THEY HAVE REAMINED CALM AND AVOIDED BIZARRE, OPEN ATTACKS ON THE US. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT WISHES TO MINIMIZE THE FMS PROBLEM, KEEP LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN AND PROTECT FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE USG.

(b) (3):10 USC 42 [redacted]

COMMENT: ON 24 MAR ARMY ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF (SEE PARA 1 ABOVE) MADE SPECIAL EFFORT TO COMMUNICATE TO US ARMY MISSION CHIEF THAT ARGENTINE ARMY CONSIDERED REDUCTION IN FMS CREDITS TO BE A PURELY POLITICAL PROBLEM WHICH DETRACTED IN NO WAY FROM THE PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO ARMIES. HE ADDED THAT THE ARMY COMMANDER (AND PRESIDENT) LTG VIDELA, HAD ASKED HIM TO ENSURE THAT THE US ARMY MISSION CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THE ARGENTINE POSITION. THIS REPORT ON REACTIONS TO US HUMAN RIGHTS INVITIATIVES IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT COMMENTING ON THE FACT THAT MOST ARGENTINE MILITARY PREFER TO DEAL WITH THE EFFECTS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS "PROBLEM" RATHER THAN THE CAUSES. THEY PREFER NOT TO DISCUSS ABUSES, BUT WHEN PRESSED WILL ADMIT THAT SOME VIOLATIONS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY TAKEN PLACE. WHEN ASKED WHEN THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO TAKE ACTION TO UNISH MILITARY AND POLICE FOR UNLAWFUL ACTS AND WHEN

THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO PROVIDE DETAILED INFORMATION ON DETAINED PERSONS, MOST MILITARY REFUSE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE. THEY RESPOND THAT THE METHODS NOW BEING USED ARE NECESSARY TO COMBAT THE SERIOUS SUBVERSIVE THREAT

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TO THE COUNTRY AND THAT THEY DO NOT PLAN TO LET UP
UNTIL THE BATTLE IS WON. [redacted] OTHER EMBASSY
OFFICERS HAVE BEEN SURPRISED AT THE SOLIDARITY AMONG
MILITARY OFFICERS ON THIS POINT, AND THEIR RESOLVE TO
FIGHT THE BATTLE IN THEIR OWN WAY WHETHER OTHER COUNTRIES
AGREE OR NOT.
THE MSG HAS BEEN COORD WITH EMBASSY.
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